

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO USDA/FAS WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0497
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 3601

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE-VENEZUELAN BILATERAL TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL
COMMODITIES.

TOFAS 103

1. PRESS COMMENTS INDICATE THAT DURING RECENT VISIT BY
ARGENTINE PRESIDENT VIDELA TO VENEZUELA MATTERS SUCH AS
VENEZUELA'S IMPORTS OF ARGENTINE GRAINS, BEEF AND LIVE
CATTE WERE DISCUSSED. UNCLEAR FROM PRESS REPORTS HOW
SUBSTANTIVE THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE, BUT IF DISCUSSION
MATERIALIZE INTO ACTUAL TRADE, RESULT WOULD BE NEW MARKETS
FOR ARGENTINE COMMODITIES.

2. FOR 1976 ARGENTINE AND VENEZUELA SIGNED A BILATERAL
GRAINS AGREEMENT THAT WAS TO HAVE INCLUDED 200,000 TONS
OF WHEAT, 100,000 OF CORN, AND 100,000 OF GRAIN SORGHUM
AND ANOTHER BILATERAL WAS SIGNED FOR 1977 THAT INCLUDES
300,000 TONS OF WHEAT (100,000 TONS WAS CARRIED-OVER
FROM 1976 AGREEMENT AND 300,000 TONS OF CORN AND/OR GRAIN
SORGHUM). VENEZUELA HAS NOT HISTORICALLY BEEN A SIGNIFICANT
MARKET FOR ARGENTINE GRAIN AS ARGENTINA PRODUCTS SUFFER A
FREIGHT DISADVANTAGE VIS-A-VIS EXPORTS FROM U.S. GULF.

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THESE BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ARE MORE OR LESS LETTERS OF INTENT,
AND FROM ARGENTINE SIDE, AT CURRENT TIME, IT IS UP TO PROVATE
SHIPPERS TO MAKE ACTUAL SALES. ARGENTINE 1976 ACTUAL EXPORTS
WERE 100,995 TONS OF WHEAT, 50,000 TONS OF CORN AND 100,000
TONS OF GRAIN SORGHUM. FOR JANUARY-APRIL 1977 ONLY EXPORTS
ARE 35,504 TONS OF GRAIN SORGHUM.

3. AT CURRENT TIME, VENEZUELA PROHIBITS IMPORTS OF EITHER ARGENTINE BEEF OR LIVE CATTLE BECAUSE OF PRESENCE OF AFTOSA, OR AT LEAST A CERTAIN STRAIN OF AFTOSA, IN ARGENTINA. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT VENEZUELAN VETERINARY MISSION WILL BE COMONG TO REVIEW PACKING HOUSES AND ARGENTINE VETERINARY SAFE-GUARDS. IF VENEZUELA FINDS ARGENTINE VETERINARY PROVISIONS ACCEPTABLE, PRESUMABLY IT WOULD BEGIN TO IMPORT BEEF AND LIVE CATTLE. ARGENTINA HAS BEEN PRESSING FOR SOME TIME TO SELL BOTH TO VENEZUELA. THESE IS A PARICULARLY STRONG INTEREST IN SELLING VENEZUELA HOLSTEIN DAIRY CATTLE.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS AND TRADE SOURCES, VENEZUELA COMMERCIAL MISSION COMING TO ARGENTINA SHORTLY.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE CARACAS VIEWS RE. POSSIBILITIES OF ARGENTINA OPENNING UP BEEF AND CATTLE TRADE WITH VENEZUELA. ALSO, WHAT ARE POSSIBILITIES OF VENEZUELA BUYING 300,000 TONS OF WHEAT FROM ARGENTINA? IF VENEZUELA DOES SO, IT WOULD CLEAN-OUT ARGENTINA, PROBABLY TO POINT OF EXCLUDING FURTHER SALES TO CHILE.
CHAPLIN

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